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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 187th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 29 April 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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Other matters

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

REPORT ON THE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM AND THE NINTH UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD AT GENEVA ON 30 AND 31 MARCH 1992

2. The CHAIRMAN said that he had headed the Committee's delegation to the Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium and the Ninth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva on 30 and 31 March 1992. The delegation had also included the Permanent Observer for Palestine.

3. At the Committee's invitation, the 22 members of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on the Question of Palestine, as well as 5 of the 10 members who comprised the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, had been present at the Preparatory Meeting. The five remaining members of the European Coordinating Committee had attended the Meeting at their own expense.

4. The International Coordinating Committee had included four NGO representatives from the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as three Israeli representatives. That had enabled the participants at the Meeting to exchange useful information on their experience and to express interesting points of view, which had facilitated preparations for the International NGO Meeting and the European Symposium. Moreover, the presence of the chairmen of the regional coordinating committees had provided additional perspectives.

5. The members of the International Coordinating Committee and those of the European Coordinating Committee had held joint and separate meetings in order to consider and complete draft programmes for their respective meetings. The proposed programmes had subsequently been considered by the delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the two coordinating committees and revised in the light of the comments made by the delegation of the Committee. The Division for Palestinian Rights had prepared two working papers (Nos. 2 and 3) that reflected the results of those deliberations.

6. Working Paper No. 2 contained the provisional programme of the Ninth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, whose theme was entitled "Protection and Statehood". The International Coordinating Committee had requested the Committee to invite Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and other eminent personalities to make introductory statements at the opening meeting of the International NGO Meeting.

(The Chairman)

7. The International NGO Meeting would include three plenary sessions. Plenary session I, entitled "Protection", would begin with a multi-media video or slide presentation, which would be followed by reports on land, water and settlements; human rights; the role of the United Nations and sanctions; and refugees. Plenary session II, entitled "Statehood", would include topics on political initiatives; Palestine institution-building; regional security and disarmament; and Jerusalem. Plenary session III, which dealt with the NGO process, would consider reports from the regions and would discuss NGO networking. It had been proposed that 12 working groups and task forces should be established.

8. Working Paper No. 3 contained the provisional programme for the Sixth United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, whose theme was "Working for peace - European coordination". Two plenary sessions had been recommended. Plenary session I would deal with the responsibilities of European governmental and non-governmental bodies towards the Palestinian people, and plenary session II would consider the report on the activities of the European Coordinating Committee during the past year (August 1991 to August 1992). In addition, two workshops and three information groups would meet.

9. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved Working Papers No. 2 and No. 3.

10. It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, 22-23 JUNE 1992, NEW YORK

11. The CHAIRMAN said that the provisional programme for the United Nations North American Seminar on the Question of Palestine was contained in Working Paper No. 4.

12. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved in principle the provisional programme for the Seminar.

13. It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

14. The CHAIRMAN said that the Government of Malta had generously offered to act as host for the United Nations European Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which would be held at the end of July 1992.

15. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to accept the offer made by the Government of Malta.

16. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

17. Mr. TLILI (Chief, Anti-Apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programmes Section, Department of Public Information) reaffirmed the Department's commitment to carrying out the activities mandated by the General Assembly, most recently expressed in resolution 46/74 C, with respect to the question of Palestine. Within the framework laid down by that resolution, the Department was endeavouring to further the understanding of the question of Palestine and to promote the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination through a combination of multi-media activities focusing on public opinion in Europe and North America.

18. The draft of a booklet, on the life of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation, intended for wide distribution, had just been submitted to the Department of Political Affairs for clearance. It would be based on information from United Nations sources, including reports on the work of the Committee. A booklet entitled "Prospects for Peace in the Middle East: An Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue", based on the discussions on the convening of an international conference on the Middle East held at the International Encounter for European Journalists on the question of Palestine in June 1991, was now in the production stage. An updated edition of a booklet on the work of the Committee would also be published. Finally, a poster designed by French artist Michel Granger promoting self-determination as an inalienable right of the Palestinian people would be released soon.

19. The first in a programme of national and international encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine would be held in Dublin, Ireland in May 1992 on the theme "Preparing for Peace: the Imperative for Interim Relief in the Occupied Palestinian Territory". Palestinian and Israeli panelists and Middle East experts from the European Communities Commission and other Irish experts had been invited to participate. Issues relating to obligations under the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and practical approaches to Europe's role would be explored. Other such encounters were planned for Prague, Czechoslovakia, and Lisbon, Portugal. An updated version of the Headquarters photo exhibit on Palestinian rights highlighting recent developments was also planned.

20. The 1992 programme would end with a fact-finding news mission to the Middle East. In that regard, the in-house production of a publication, impressive in both volume and scope, based on the news reports resulting from the previous fact-finding mission, was nearly complete.

Applications of NGOs for accreditation to the Committee (Working Paper No. 5)

21. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to Working Paper No. 5, containing information on 80 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which had indicated that they wished to participate in NGO meetings held under the auspices of the Committee. All the requests for accreditation had been approved by the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine or

(The Chairman)

the various regional coordination committees. Furthermore, all requests had been studied carefully by the Secretariat and approved by the Bureau.

22. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the requests for accreditation contained in Working Paper No. 5.

23. It was so decided.

24. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation was approaching, and that sad occasion was a reminder that the United Nations as yet had been unsuccessful in achieving its objectives. That date could serve, however, to draw attention to the activities of the Committee, and his delegation would be submitting to the Bureau several proposals for programmes to commemorate that anniversary.

25. Turning to the political situation, he noted that bilateral talks between the Arab parties and Israel were currently under way in Washington, D.C. Frankly, little progress was expected since Israel's position indicated that it was not serious about the negotiations. Settlement in the occupied territories was continuing, and Israel had offered only general ideas on elections in an attempt to evade the Palestinian position on transition, which was based on ending Israeli settlement and organizing general elections in the occupied territories as early as possible. Acts of repression and reprisals by Israeli death squads must be ended. Since December, special Israeli Army units had killed more than 35 people, and messages had been sent to the President of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General calling for an immediate end to their activities.

26. With regard to the multilateral talks proposed by the co-chairmen of the negotiations, five working groups were to meet in five different capitals during May 1992. Palestinian participation in such talks must reflect the unity of the Palestinian people, even though Israel was attempting to treat the matter as a local issue rather than a national question. Greater and more effective coordination among the Arab parties - Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine - had resulted in a series of negotiations held recently in Beirut. Continued coordination would be required to maintain the pressure on Israel.

27. The United Nations should continue to play an important role, first and foremost by protecting the Palestinian people in implementation of Security Council resolution 681 (1991). His delegation would continue to insist on a primary role for the Organization in order to give legitimacy to the negotiations under international law. The Secretary-General should insist that the United Nations should be issued a separate invitation for full participation in all stages of the settlement process. Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and all other Security Council resolutions were binding on all Member States.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.